Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy

HIGHLIGHTS 2005/2006

AADAC ALBERTA ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE COMMISSION

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Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and premature death in Alberta. Every year more than 3,400 Albertans die from tobacco-related causes. According to a study of the Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002 by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, tobacco use costs the Alberta economy $1.8 billion annually.

Since the inception of the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy (ATRS) in 2002, significant progress has been made under the leadership of AADAC towards the goals of reducing the number of young people who start to smoke, encouraging and helping current tobacco users to quit and reducing non-smokers' exposure to second-hand smoke.

AADAC achieved a number of accomplishments in 2005/2006. The most notable achievement was the implementation of the Smoke-Free Places Act, which took effect on January 1, 2006.

AADAC and partners also launched an innovative and interactive website called albertaquits.ca. This free service capitalizes on Albertans' increasing use of the Internet to provide information and support for smokers trying to quit.

But AADAC and our many partners and stakeholders continue to face a number of unique challenges as we work towards these goals. One of these challenges is the tobacco industry's aggressive marketing including campaigns aimed at young adults, and the use of tobacco product displays in retail stores. Another challenge is Alberta's growing population and shifting demographics. In 2005, Alberta's population grew by more than 50,000. Much of this increase is due to immigration from other parts of the world and migration from other parts of Canada with higher smoking rates than Alberta's. The introduction of discount brands of cigarettes in the past few years has also affected the province's smoking rates.

AADAC recognizes these challenges and we remain committed to addressing them in developing and reviewing our tobacco programs and services. We will continue to collaborate with our many valued partners, stakeholders and organizations. And we will continue to support leading-edge research and technology to help guide and evaluate our work.

The Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy Highlights 2005/2006 recognizes many of our accomplishments over the past year, and it outlines our future directions as AADAC continues to work towards the province's goals in tobacco reduction.

R.M. Finnerty
President and CEO
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

INTRODUCTION

The challenge

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and premature death in Alberta. More than 3,400 Albertans die each year from tobacco-related causes.
- There is no safe amount of tobacco use or exposure to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke causes heart disease and lung cancer. Children are also more likely to have lung problems, ear infections and asthma from exposure to tobacco smoke.
- Approximately one-fifth (21%) of Albertans aged 15 and older currently smoke.

Alberta continues to take action

Since Alberta launched the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy (ATRS) in April 2002, AADAC has led the strategy and ensured the implementation of comprehensive and co-ordinated health initiatives based on six key elements:

- leadership and co-ordination
- taxation as a prevention strategy
- prevention and education
- reduction and cessation
- research and evaluation
- legislation to restrict access and exposure

ATRS goals

The goals of the ATRS are to increase the wellness of Albertans and decrease health-care costs by

- reducing the number of young people starting to smoke
- encouraging and helping current tobacco users to quit
- reducing non-smokers' exposure to second-hand smoke

Performance targets

The ATRS has established the following performance targets:

- Reduce the consumption of tobacco products in Alberta by 50% from 2001 to 2011 (Alberta Finance annual statistics).

- Reduce the percentage of Albertans aged 15 and over who smoke from 25% in 2001 to 17.5% in 2011 (Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey).
- Reduce the percentage of youth aged 15 to 19 who smoke from 24% in 2001 to 12% in 2011 (Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey).
- Reduce the percentage of women who smoke during pregnancy from 32% in 2000/2001 to 12% in 2010/2011 (Canadian Community Health Survey).

HIGHLIGHTS

ATRS actions 2005/2006

The ATRS is based on a 2001 interdepartmental report, *Reducing Tobacco Use in Alberta: A Comprehensive Strategy*, which outlines its six elements. The following is a progress report for the fourth year of implementation.

Element 1: Leadership and co-ordination

Through a specialized Tobacco Reduction Unit, AADAC continued to lead and co-ordinate the ATRS in 2005/2006.

- In 2005/2006, AADAC provided approximately $3.1 million in community grants to health regions, college and university groups, community groups and non-government organizations for local tobacco reduction projects in Alberta.
- Consultations with regional health authorities, non-government organizations, Aboriginal groups, the federal government and other provinces were ongoing.
- Internal and external advisory committees continued to guide the strategy and ensure a co-ordinated approach.
- AADAC's 30 tobacco reduction counsellors continued working provincewide with community partners to build tobacco reduction capacity in Alberta.

Element 2: Taxation as a prevention strategy

- Tobacco sales dropped substantially since the tax increase in 2002, but have been increasing since 2003/2004. Cigarette sales in Alberta were up 5% between April 2005 and March 2006 as compared with sales in 2004/2005.
- AADAC continued to work with the federal government, provincial governments and other stakeholders to provide recommendations for taxation on tobacco.

Element 3: Prevention and education

- The Aboriginal Tobacco Use Strategy (ATUS) funded 19 off-reserve Aboriginal communities and organizations to develop and deliver prevention, education, cessation and protection programs, with an emphasis on the difference between sacred and recreational tobacco use. A guiding circle of elders, youth and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations continued to provide direction on the strategy.

- In 2005/2006, AADAC continued funding tobacco reduction projects throughout the province. Funding priority was given to those projects focused on special populations such as youth, pregnant and postpartum women, and persons with mental illness.
- The Young Adult Tobacco Reduction Strategy (YTRS) continued to fund initiatives in 13 colleges, universities and community agencies. These programs, targeting Albertans aged 18 to 24, focus on creating awareness, increasing support for cessation, helping policy development and denormalizing tobacco use.
- As part of the YTRS, AADAC hosted CounterAct: Defy the Industry, Stop the Spread. This workshop provided grant recipients and AADAC staff with an opportunity to attend sessions on media, policy development, student mobilization, project planning and the tobacco industry.
- AADAC and its partners continued to deliver the following education, prevention and cessation programs for youth across the province: Teaming up for Tobacco-Free Kids, Building Leadership for Action in Schools Today (BLAST), Sport for Life, and Kick the Nic.
- The Alberta Spit Tobacco Education Program (ASTEP) continued to be implemented across the province, raising the awareness of the dangers of spit tobacco use among youth involved in sports.

Element 4: Reduction and cessation

- AADAC, in partnership with The Lung Association and Canadian Cancer Society, launched a new online cessation program called albertaquits.ca. This free service offers additional cessation support tools for smokers trying to quit.
- AADAC developed a public awareness campaign, funded by Health Canada, targeting young adult smokers aged 18 to 24. The campaign included television advertisements, and restaurant and bar posters (see page 12 for more details).
- The toll-free, provincewide Smokers' Help Line (1-866-332-2322) continued to provide counselling, information and referral services for smokers trying to quit.
- AADAC provided funding to regional health authorities and several non-government organizations to work with health-care providers (physicians, oral health professionals, nurses, respiratory therapists and home visitors) to help Albertans quit smoking.
- AADAC co-hosted a forum with Public Health Agency of Canada and First Nations Inuit Health Branch to introduce Cessation in Pregnancy: A Best-Practices Forum on Tobacco Cessation Interventions for Pregnant and Postpartum Women. Approximately 200 service providers working with pregnant and postpartum women attended this forum.

Element 5: Research and evaluation

- Evaluation of the reach, utilization, quality and effectiveness of the AADAC Smokers' Help Line was conducted in collaboration with Capital Health Region.
- An evaluation of the 2005/2006 ATRS young adult tobacco cessation public awareness campaign was initiated. Intentions to quit smoking, quit attempts and awareness of tobacco cessation services among the campaign's target audience (young adult smokers aged 18 to 24) were measured before and after the campaign was broadcast in March 2006.
- Population surveillance of tobacco use in Alberta was conducted to monitor smoking rates, use of smokeless tobacco products, exposure to second-hand smoke, smoking cessation rates and related tobacco use behaviour among Albertans.
- Statistics Canada was contracted to over-sample the Alberta population for the 2005 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey to obtain reliable estimates of tobacco use behaviour among different groups in the provincial population.

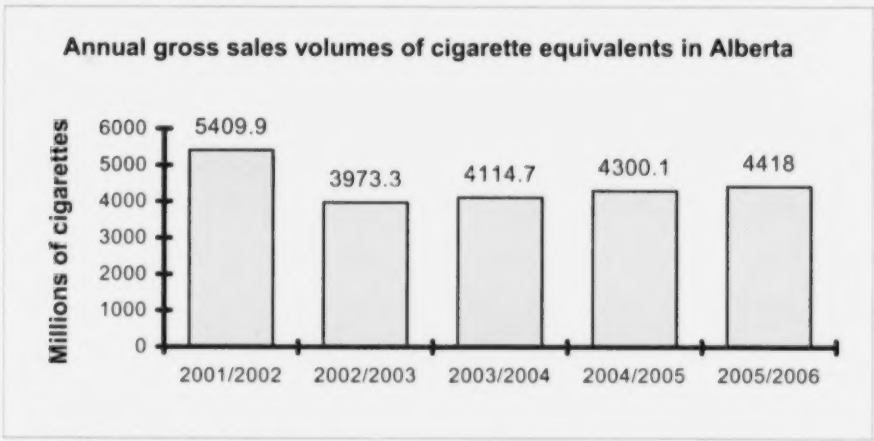
Element 6: Legislation to restrict access and exposure

- Alberta's Smoke-Free Places Act came into effect on January 1, 2006. This act prohibits minors from entering any establishments where smoking is permitted. It protects children and youth from the harm of second-hand smoke and sets a minimum standard for all communities across the province.
- The Community Capacity Building and Bylaw Development program provided funding to 12 community-based campaigns to develop local smoke-free policies.
- Eighteen municipalities across the province have passed 100% smoke-free bylaws (Edmonton, Airdrie, Calgary, Stettler, Red Deer, Banff, Devon, Jasper, Beaumont, Strathcona County, Lethbridge, St. Albert, Cardston, Sundance Beach, Cochrane, Whitecourt, Canmore and Lloydminster).
- AADAC continued to work with municipalities to develop, implement and maintain smoke-free policies that further protect citizens from second-hand smoke.
- Alberta's Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act, implemented April 1, 2003, continued to prohibit youth under the age of 18 from possessing and using tobacco products in public places.

ATRS RESULTS

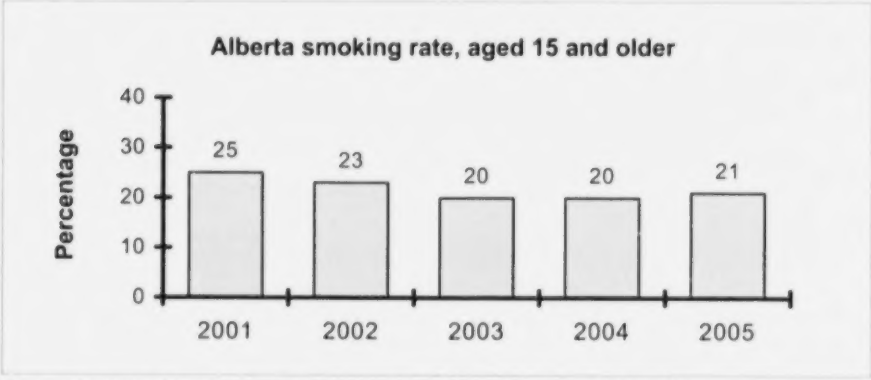
Fourth-year statistics

According to Alberta Finance, annual gross sales volumes of cigarettes and cigarette equivalents increased in 2005/2006. Cigarette sales in Alberta were up 5%, and cigar sales rose by 21% between April 2005 and March 2006 compared with 2004/2005. In contrast, sales of loose tobacco and tobacco sticks continued to decline, a downward trend first observed in 2003/2004. According to the 2005 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS), 26% of smokers in Alberta prefer to buy discount cigarettes, up from 20% in 2004. Older smokers (aged 36+) purchase a higher proportion of discount cigarettes than do younger smokers.



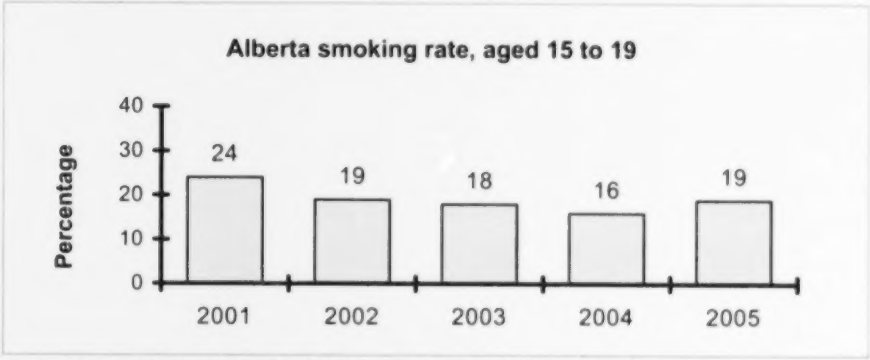
Source: Alberta Finance

The 2005 CTUMS also shows that the smoking rate in Alberta increased slightly to 21% among Albertans aged 15 years and older, up from 20% in 2003 and 2004. The provincial smoking rate is now higher than the national smoking rate of 19% among Canadians aged 15 and older.



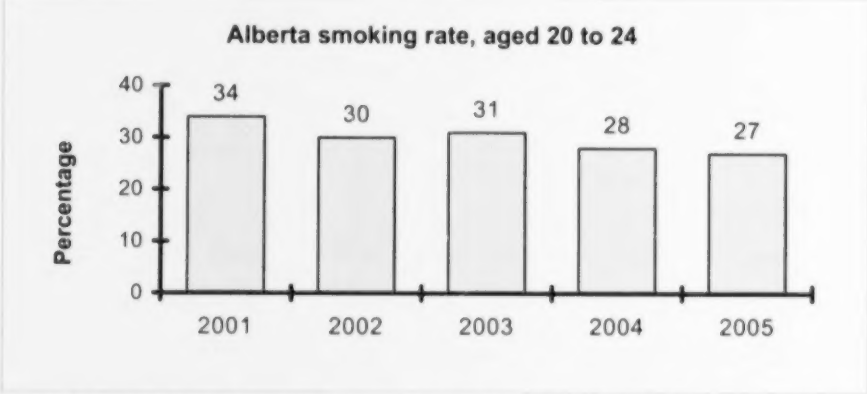
Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001–2005

The smoking rate for Alberta youth and young adults aged 15 to 19 increased from 16% in 2004 to 19% in 2005. This increase occurred specifically among males, for whom the smoking rate increased from 14% in 2004 to 21% in 2005. The smoking rate among females aged 15 to 19 remained stable at 17% in 2004 and 2005.



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001–2005

In 2005, the smoking rate among young adults aged 20 to 24 dropped to 27% for both males and females. This represents a 7% overall reduction in the smoking rate among this age group over the past five years. Still, young adults aged 20 to 24 have the highest smoking rate in Alberta and Canada.



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2001–2005

Costs of tobacco use to the Alberta economy

Tobacco reduction initiatives are a good investment:

- According to a study of the Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002 by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, tobacco use costs the Alberta economy an estimated $1.8 billion annually.

- In Alberta, lost productivity due to tobacco-related illness and premature death is the largest type of cost ($1.3 billion). Direct health-care costs attributed to tobacco use are estimated at $471 million annually.

ATRS public awareness campaign

In 2005/2006, the ATRS public awareness campaign continued to focus on information, prevention and cessation. The campaign follows best practice guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control for counter-marketing measures in tobacco control by

- combining messages on prevention, cessation and protection from second-hand smoke, as well as targeting both young people and adults
- including event sponsorships and community tie-ins
- maximizing the number, variety and novelty of messages and production styles
- using non-authoritarian appeals that avoid direct exhortations not to smoke and do not highlight a single theme or tag line

Prevention

Prevention is a key element of the public awareness campaign. This year, the campaign used movie theatres and posters to reach audiences aged 12 to 17. "No Regrets," a spot based on the health effects of smoking coupled with common reasons youth smoke, ran in movie theatres across the province in October 2005 and again in February 2006. The February 2006 run was supported by a poster campaign across the province in 173 schools in seven major markets.

AADAC also sponsored the advertising category of the Hot Shots Film Festival. High school students from across the province submitted 30-second TV advertisements with tobacco reduction messages in the areas of prevention, information and cessation. Through this sponsorship, more than 800 youth were exposed to tobacco reduction messaging.

Sponsorship of the Alberta Summer Games also provided opportunities to spread tobacco reduction messaging to youth and their parents. Advertising and signage at the Athlete's Festival reached more than 2,500 athletes, 500 coaches and 3,000 volunteers.

Cessation

Health Canada funded a campaign targeting young adult smokers aged 18 to 24 smokers. The campaign included a television advertisement as well as restaurant and bar posters with the message "One cigarette never killed anyone, but who ever smoked just one."

In October 2005, the albertaquits.ca website was launched and supported with print advertising. The visits to the site well exceeded targets in the first three

months. Promotion of the site as a means to quit smoking continued through print advertising during National Non-Smoking Week, cable TV listing advertising, Internet advertising, radio, washroom posters, eBoard advertising, and creative classified ad and sports venue marketing during the NHL, CFL and Northern League Professional Baseball seasons.

The Smokers' Help Line was also promoted through sports venue marketing including WHL, CFL and professional baseball locations.

Information

On January 1, 2006, the Smoke-Free Places Act came into effect. An information campaign to support implementation of this act took place in the fall of 2005. This included a website, brochures, print advertising, radio advertising, direct mail advertising, e-mail marketing and targeted stakeholder communication.

Public support remains strong

In an April 2005, Ipsos-ASI survey of 800 adult Albertans, 400 of whom were current smokers, approximately

- 90% agreed that people should not smoke in public places where children are present
- 80% supported tougher penalties for people who sell or give cigarettes to youth under age 18
- 80% agreed that smoking should be banned in all workplaces
- 65% supported the banning of public displays of cigarettes in retail stores

ATRS actions 2006/2007

In partnership with the Centre for Health Promotion Studies at the University of Alberta, AADAC will host a two-day event titled Tobacco Reduction Together: Linking Research, Policy and Practice.

As part of a visioning initiative, AADAC will consult with tobacco stakeholders, including regional health authorities and non-government organizations. The objectives of the consultations are to review the ATRS and seek new opportunities for increased partnerships and collaborations.

AADAC will co-sponsor the 5th National Conference on Tobacco or Health in October 2007. This is the first time this important conference will be held in Alberta.

albertaquits.ca
smokers' help line
1-866-33AADAC
1-866-332-2322
aadac.com

ALBERTA ALCOHOL AND
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For more information, contact your local AADAC office, call ' 866-33AADAC or visit our website www.aadac.com

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